DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 262 876 PS 015 377

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TITLE Competencies and Contexts of Friendship Development in a Reverse Mainstreamed Preschool.
PUB DATE Apr 85
NOTE 30p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (69th, Chicago, IL, March 31-April 4, 1985).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Observation Techniques; Classroom Research; *Competence; Curriculum Development; Educational Practices; *Friendship; Interpersonal Competence; Intervention; *Mainstreaming; *Mental Retardation; *Preschool Children; Preschool Education; Relationship; Social Behavior; *Social Development; Special Education
IDENTIFIERS Context Effect; Normal Children; *Reverse Mainstreaming; Scripts (Knowledge Structures); Social Interaction

ABSTRACT

An observational study of classroom behavior was made to identify competencies and contexts of social interaction influencing the development of friendship among preschool children attending an integrated special education classroom. Subjects were six boys and four girls whose ages ranged from 3 to 6 years. Two of the children, a 4-year-old girl and a 5-year-old boy, were enrolled as normal peer models. The eight developmentally delayed children differed in the severity of their mental handicap. Data suggest that friendship between handicapped and nonhandicapped preschool children was an activity-related phenomenon in which the quality of children's relationships was more important than the quantity of interaction. Skills for maintaining social interaction were central to the success of the handicapped children's involvement in cooperative play activities and their subsequent social acceptance by normal peers. Findings also suggest that social relations between normal and handicapped children that originate from a positive base of parallel or adult-directed play are more likely to be sustained and may result in more complex interactions, than if cross-group friendships are initially tested through cooperative activity involvements. Implications for practice are extensively discussed. (RH)

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ED262876

COMPETENCIES AND CONTEXTS OF FRIENDSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN A REVERSE MAINSTREAMED PRESCHOOL

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April, 1985

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.

PS 015377

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Background and Problem

Although the practice of mainstreaming is supported both by law and by theory, its assumptions have been challenged by the empirical evidence at hand. Two of the key assumptions behind mainstreaming, as noted by Linton and Juul (1980), are:

1. The handicapped child will benefit both academically and socially from integration with nonhandicapped students; and

2. nonhandicapped students in mainstreamed classes will interact with and socially accept their handicapped classmates.

There is more empirical support for the first assumption than for the second. Indeed, most studies point to the social rejection of the handicapped and minimal cross-group interaction within integrated classrooms. The exception to this general pattern occurs in cases in which teachers systematically structure cooperative interaction and/or utilize behavior modification techniques to facilitate cross-group social interaction (see, for example, Guralnick, 1976; Snyder, Apolloni & Cooke, 1977).

The current state of the literature suggests that social skills training with handicapped children holds potential for facilitating mainstreaming efforts. However, there is a lack of adequately developed theory regarding: (a) which social skills need to be selected for such training (Gresham, 1981); (b) the characteristics which differentiate handicapped students who are socially accepted in integrated classes from those who are not (Gottlieb, 1981); and (c) the criteria for training and selection of nonhandicapped children to

function as effective peer models who will accept and interact with mainstreamed handicapped children (Gresham, 1981). These issues in theory development raise a variety of questions for which answers are needed.

Existing sociometric evidence suggests that perceptions of misbehavior are associated with the social rejection of educable mentally retarded (EMR) children. However, sociometric measures have indicated little about the particular social competencies/behaviors involved in the peer acceptance/rejection dynamics which take place within mainstreamed classrooms (Asher & Taylor, 1981; Gottlieb et al. 1978). It is also entirely plausible that different behavioral expressions do not contribute equally to the handicapped child's perceived misbehavior, and that some behaviors are more important than others for the development and maintenance of social relationships between handicapped and normal children. The importance of friendship initiation and maintenance skills for mainstreamed handicapped children has just begun to be recognized (Asher & Taylor, 1981) and a paucity of data exists on this issue. The domain of conflict resolution is yet another area to which mainstreaming research needs to be directed. As yet, little is known about conflict management strategies which promote the social acceptance of EMR pupils and which skills facilitate social interaction between handicapped and nonhandicapped children.

Toward clarifying some of the issues posed above, the present study focused on identifying the competencies and contexts of social interaction which influence the development of friendship among preschool children within an integrated special education classroom. The primary objectives of the study were:

- To define the meaning of friendship for nonhandicapped students in an integrated preschool

- To develop ecologically valid constructs useful to the explanation of friendships between handicapped and non-handicapped children, and

- To explore a variety of practical options which might improve the social acceptance of handicapped students within mainstreamed preschool settings.

Methodology

Virtually all of the published mainstreaming studies concerned with social process variables have utilized systematic observation designs in which it has been tacitly assumed that (a) social acceptance and rejection can be deduced a priori from existing theory and/or the pertinent research literature, and that (b) hypothesis confirmation is scientifically more desirable than hypothesis formation. Since mainstreaming research has been criticized for lacking "ecological validity" by Brooks & Baumeister (1978), we risk unnecessarily the premature testing of conceptually under-developed theory by relying exclusively on "preordinant" designs. Given this point of view, the study was guided by a naturalistic perspective to social research in which an ethnographic methodological framework was adopted. The study utilized, therefore, a variant of grounded theory methodology (e.g. Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Setting, Participants, and Context of the Study

The study was a doctoral dissertation conducted at Indiana University, Bloomington, in a multicategorical preschool within the public school system. The preschool was an HCEEP demonstration project, designed partly as a model for demonstrating how mainstreaming might be implemented in a public school setting at the prekindergarten level under the "permissive" interpretation of the P.L. 94-142 mandate. To accomplish its mission as a mainstreaming demonstration project, the preschool adopted the Normal Peer Model or reverse mainstreaming approach. This approach involved the enrollment of nonhandicapped children in

the special children's preschool classroom. The ratio of normal models to their handicapped peers was 2:8 in a classroom of ten children.

The classroom in which the research was conducted was populated by six boys and four girls whose ages ranged from three to six. Of the two children enrolled as normal peer models, one was a four-year-old girl and the other a five-year-old boy. Of the eight developmentally delayed children, two were mildy mentally handicapped, three were moderately mentally handicapped and three were severely mentally handicapped. The sex distribution of the handicapped children was approximately equal across severity of handicapping condition. The classroom was staffed by a head teacher, an instructional associate, and usually a practicum student. Ancillary support staff included a speech therapist, an adapted physical educator, an occupational therapist, and a physical therapist.

Procedures

Data collection proceeded in three phases of fieldwork across one academic year. Beginning in the Fall of 1981, a two-month period of preliminary fieldwork was devoted to "pilot testing" activities concerning refinement of the inquiry design with respect to options for theoretical sampling, data collection procedures, and negotiating collaboration of the preschool staff. A second two-month phase of fieldwork ensued during the winter in which the social interaction patterns of the two normal peer models were observed and documented. The final phase of fieldwork took place in the spring in which observations were designed to generate explanatory constructs. The observation data were supplemented by interviews with the normal models and the head teacher at the close of each fieldwork cycle. The parents of the normal models were also interviewed at the conclusion of the study. A third source of data was provided by field logs maintained by the head teacher for each child in her classroom.

The observation data were collected using a modified specimen record approach. This procedure involved audio recording of verbally dictated fieldnotes using an unobtrusive, hand-concealed microphone wired to a small, hand-held audio tape recorder. Based on the pilot study, this procedure proved to be the most efficient and effective means for recording observation fieldnotes when tracking a given target child. A second audio tape recorder was placed in a concealed, centrally located area of an activity setting (e.g. a doll house), when possible, in order to record verbatim verbal behavior and context cues. Both tapes were used in constructing a specimen record from an observation.

Audio tapes of the observations were transcribed as soon as possible following data collection in order to facilitate recall of details and to enhance the feasibility of elaborating upon the taped fieldnotes when necessary. These observation transcripts were formatted as specimen records which Wright (1967) defines as a "detailed, sequential narrative account of behavior and its immediate environmental context . . . (which) describes in concrete particulars the stream of an individual's behavior and habitat" (p. 32). Each specimen record was unitized into behavior episodes. A reliability study using Barker & Wright's (1971) formula for estimating inter-analyst agreement in episode unitization resulted in an agreement index of .86, after which the formal data analysis was initiated.

Excluding the preliminary fieldwork phase, 77 specimen records were collected. Forty-eight of these records pertained to the normal peer models; selected handicapped children were the subject of observation in the remaining 27 records. In total, the specimen records covered 26 hours of direct observation and generated approximately 600 pages of narrative transcript.

Formal analyses took place during interims between fieldwork phases and during a protracted period of post fieldwork. I used the Constant Comparative Method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to analyze the specimen records in which the behavior episode (Barker & Wright, 1971) served as the unit of analysis. The interview and field log data were content analyzed and then synthesized with the observation analyses in developing case studies on each of the ten children. Both within-case and cross-case analyses were conducted. In both of these procedures, case study analysis moved through a series of phases from the generation of analytic categories and their properties, to the discovery of patterns among categories and properties, and finally to the generation of hypotheses. Themes which integrated the various sets of hypotheses formed the basis of a reduced set of propositions.

Propositions bearing on clearly defined and specific issues (e.g. the rejection of friendship) were tested and refined by the use of Analytic Induction (e.g. Turner, 1953). I first ascertained areas of the case study data which were of critical importance to the adequacy of formulated propositions and then tested these propositions against all relevant cases by trying to discover negating or disconfirming evidence (i.e., negative cases). The occurence of negative cases resulted in either modifying a proposition or reformulating the definition of a phenomenon.

Major Findings

What is a friend? Rubin (1980) suggests that "if we are interested in understanding a child's friendships . . . we must do our best to understand them in the child's own terms" (p. 44). From the perspective of the normal children studied here, friendship was a matter of interactional quality related to a playmate's competencies for involvement in the normal child's preferred

activities. These competencies varied according to the skill requirements of successful involvement and the level of social participation demanded by a particular activity.

Two factors were central to the quality dimension of friendship. One factor derives from the normal models' contention that best friends "have to be nice"; I have labeled this construct the "niceness factor." The second factor emerged from observations of the normal models' peer interactions; this construct has been labeled the "responsiveness to the leader factor." Each of these two friendship factors is composed of multiple properties which manifest themselves in different ways depending on the kind of play activity engaged in, and associated requirements of social participation.

The two major properties of the niceness factor articulated by the normal models were sharing and nonaggression. Both of these behavioral qualities were perceived by the normal children as values preferred in playmates. Sharing involved cooperating in the distribution of material goods (e.g. toys) among playmates, either upon request or through self-initiation as required by an activity or situation. Sharing also involved abstaining from the taking of material goods possessed by another child when those objects have not been offered. Nonaggressiveness required the avoidance of physical or verbal hostility endangering the physical and emotional well-being of another child. A nonaggressive child was one who, for example, abstained from hitting or name-calling while playing with, or in the presence of, other children.

The term "leader" is used here in the context of the responsiveness factor to mean the child who initiates peer social interaction and who attempts to organize and maintain the activity once social interaction has commenced (or who is recognized and expected by the peer group to do these things). In the

present study, the leader was typically a normal child rather than a handicapped child. For purposes of further discussion, the construct of "responsiveness to the leader" refers to the handicapped child's responsiveness to a normal peer model. Similar to the niceness factor, the responsiveness factor includes two basic properties: (a) responsiveness to affiliation-connection overtures, and (b) responsiveness to the play script.

Responsiveness to affiliation-connection overtures refers to a child's competencies for initiating peer social interaction, gaining entry into group activities, and being receptive to social contacts made by others. Responsiveness to the play script refers to a child's competencies for coordinating with others, consistent with the parameters governing social interaction in a play activity with respect to the shared knowledge of roles, themes, and rules of conduct which organize the children's social participation (Nelson & Gruendel, 1979). The script is constructed and defined from the point of view of one of the players; in this study, scripts were usually constructed during an initiating episode by the peer group's leader, typically one of the normal models.

Knowledge of a play script, as defined by the group's leader, can be communicated explicity or be implicitly understood as mutual knowledge which the players assume each other to share. Whether the handicapped child merely complies with the normal child's definition of a play script or takes a more active role by mutually participating in its development, the critical requirement of affiliation is the ability to fulfill the demands of the play script once script transaction has been initiated.

The constructs of "niceness" and "responsiveness" both require persistent, positive responding over a period of time in order for a preschool child to be

considered a best friend of a normal peer. This proposition derives from negative case analysis data which demonstrate that isolated and occasional violations of the two friendship development factors do not necessarily result in loss of "best friend" status. What is demanded by normal children of a best friend is that he/she display a persistent and rather reliable pattern of: (a) willingness to share, (b) nonaggressiveness, (c) responsiveness to affiliation-connection overtures, and (d) demonstrated competencies for involvement in an activity preferred by the normal child in which there is a willingness to at least comply with the leader's definition of the play script. However, these four properties of special affiliation status are not demanded as absolute universals; normal children do tolerate some deviation from their ideal values in the behavior of preferred associates.

Competencies and Contexts of Friendship Development

> "How is friendship manifested between handicapped and nonhandicapped children in different kinds of activities requiring different levels of social participation?"
>
> "What characteristics differentiate handicapped children who are chosen as friends from those who are rejected by nonhandicapped peers?"

As noted in the preceding section, the development of friendships between handicapped and normal children was related to the competencies of the former for involvement in activities preferred by the latter. The competencies which promoted social acceptance of the handicapped children by their normal peers revolved around the constructs of "niceness" and "responsiveness." The properties of the "niceness" factor were (a) positive sharing and (b) nonaggression; the major properties of the "responsiveness" factor included (c) positively responding to connection overtures for affiliation, and (d) conformity to play script definitions. However, manifestations of the fourth

property (i.e., conformity to play script definitions) varied as a function of the play activity and related requirements for social participation.

Handicapped children's conformity with the play script (as defined by the normal models) was typically necessary for promoting their social acceptance and positive involvement in activities of the nonhandicapped children. Play scripts can be defined in terms of two components and associated competencies: (1) competencies for complying with normative procedural rules governing social interaction relative to primitive notions of positive justice (e.g. sharing and nonaggression), and (b) mutually understood substantive knowledge competencies necessary for transacting the script (e.g., knowledge of the roles and themes which organize the players' interaction within the group). Play scripts governing cooperative social interaction involve both of the above components whereas parallel play and adult-directed interaction tend to be influenced primarily by the first scriptal component. The play scripts of cooperative play are, therefore, more complex and exert greater demands for social participation than parallel or adult-directed interactions which do not require conformity to both scriptal components.

Level-one friendships (Damon, 1977) which involve expectations for cooperative social interaction represent a rather sophisticated and demanding form of affiliation by virtue of the competencies required of preschoolers for role taking and reciprocal interaction. However, the handicapped children's limited competencies for involvement in cooperative interactions tended to restrict the bulk of their affiliations with the normal children to the less demanding styles of peer social interaction--parallel and adult-directed play. In these kinds of activities, group cohesion was less evident since compliance to a leader's initiatives for affiliation and activity definition was less critical.

Friendship in Cooperative Play. Fundamental to friendships between the handicapped children and normal models in the context of cooperative play activities was conformity by the handicapped child to the play script as defined by the normal child. Such conformity involved those properties inherent in both the "niceness" factor as well as the "responsiveness" factor, including conformity with expectations for script transaction. Competencies necessary for successful script transaction included not only substantive knowledge of relevant roles and themes, but also the ability to communicate this information and to translate role/theme information into action. These competencies were particularly crucial to role play activities.

Consensus on the expectations and requirements for mutual involvement in a play script was a critical aspect of successful cooperative role play. In other words, the children must understand what is demanded of them in order to comply with mutually binding participation requirements. These requirements may be more or less demanding of an actor's skills and competencies: interactants can take a passive or an active role. A passive role merely entails complying with script demands as defined for the player; an active role requires involvement in the development of a script, usually by means of verbal definition and negotiation skills. Acceptance and involvement of the handicapped children in the cooperative play activities of the normal models did occur at times by their taking the more active role in mutually developing the script. However, role play between the handicapped children and the normal models tended to be more successful when script development resulted from compliance to reformulations rather than attempting to verbally negotiate reformulations of a play script.

Reformulations of a play script initiated by the handicapped children were successful in developing family role play scripts only when these children used clarification requests. However, the use of verbal negotiation strategies to

alter a script was generally used successfully only by the normal models when interacting together in homogeneous social groups. The handicapped children were generally unsuccessful in their efforts to verbally negotiate play scripts.

Limitations in language competence and a lack of shared knowledge regarding social roles and socially appropriate behavior limited the handicapped children's friendships to, at best, a very passive and limited form of cooperative interaction with the normal models. Successful cooperative interactions were usually achieved by the establishment of a play script which minimized both active reciprocity demands and the involvement of verbal behavior on the part of the handicapped child. In these kinds of scripts, the handicapped child's participation was primarily in the realm of motor skill involvement in which his/her interaction could be maintained through a normal model's use of simple and discrete <u>verbal definition statements</u> for communicating information to organize the behavior of group members.

Only one of the handicapped preschoolers achieved friendship status with the two normal peer models in cooperative play activities. This child gained his social acceptance and involvement in the normal models' cooperative play primarily through <u>compliance</u> with script demands which were defined for him or which he implicitly understood to be operative; he typically did not participate in the development or negotiation of the script. Alternatively, the handicapped children encountered difficulties in cooperative play with the normal models when they did attempt to mutually develop or negotiate the playscript--either on their own initiative or when demanded by situational developments in the course of episode transactions. What was necessary for the maintenance of social relationships in cooperative activities was <u>mutual understanding of</u> and <u>adherence to the play script</u>, regardless of whether its development was a joint

effort. Yet participation of the handicapped children in script development did promote cooperative interaction and the maintenance of social acceptance when such participation was confined to the use of clarification requests in family role play activities.

Competencies involved in the mutual development of script definitions were largely related to communications skills--expressive and receptive language competencies. Knowledge of social roles and the ability to abstract the rules of social play were also important to the development of mutual understanding of the play scripts. Communication skills, abstraction abilities, and shared social knowledge were all relevant to the children's successful coordination in developing cooperative role play scripts. Their ability to use verbal definition statements (e.g., theme, rule, role, and counter definition statements) in order to maintain cooperative interactions appeared to depend upon the above kinds of skills. These skills did not emerge in the handicapped children until late in the school year. However, by that time, the normal peer models had shifted most of their role play activities to more verbally competent and socially sophisticated playmates--each other, to the exclusion of their handicapped classmates for the most part.

The handicapped children were all relatively limited in their communication skills, abstraction skills, and social knowledge. These limitations made it difficult for them to get involved in the cooperative play activities of the normal models, much less participate in negotiating the development of role play scripts. Furthermore, the handicapped students tended to be nonresponsive to the affiliation-connection overtures of their normal peers. The most effective affiliation-connection strategy used by the normal models was a three-round sequence of offer-invite-suggest activity. This was a verbally direct strategy

which was used in an iterative sequence to promote the initiation of social interaction. It literally involved a sequence of (a) inviting a child to participate in an activity, (b) offering a role for the child to play, and (c) then suggesting a script defining the cooperative activity. This persistent three-round sequence for achieving a playmate connection was apparently necessary in view of the handicapped children's relatively low level of responsiveness to initial overtures for cooperative play interaction.

The handicapped children's limitations in physical and communicative abilities precluded the social reciprocity required of complex cooperative interactions inherent in most role play activities. Lack of mutual knowledge between the handicapped and normal children concerning social roles and normative procedure rules also appeared to reduce the potential for cross-group affiliation when interaction depended upon the requirements of cooperative role play scripts. As a result, affiliation between the handicapped children and the normal models was more often successful in less complex activities where the requirements for social participation were less stringent.

Friendship Development in Parallel and Adult-Directed Play. Adherence to, and understanding of, a substantive play script was less central to parallel and adult-directed interactions because of the quasi-group structure of such activities. However, adherence to normative procedural rules remained highly important: sharing and nonaggression were normatively sanctioned as part of the behavior regulating structure of this peer group culture. Nevertheless, normative understanding of procedural rules governing social transactions appeared to be shared more by the adults and normal models than by the handicapped children. Handicapped children who were the exceptions to the above proposition tended to be the ones who were more socially accepted by the normal

models. The observation data suggest that the two handicapped children who were chosen as best friends by the normal models, were, in fact, the most consistent in not violating rules of social conduct related to sharing and nonaggression.

In activities involving parallel or adult-directed play, the normal models still tended to function as peer group leaders in the enforcement of rules of interpersonal conduct. In these kinds of activities, the play scripts governing social relations focused primarily on conformity to rules of normative procedure rather than on particular substantive themes for group coordination. In other words, within parallel and adult-directed activities, the demands placed on social interaction were directed primarily toward the maintenance of peaceful co-existence among children in their individual pursuits. Consequently, compliance with a leader's play script definition within the context of parallel or adult-directed interaction focused more on issues of sharing and nonaggression. Handicapped children who consistently complied with the normative procedural emphasis of parallel and adult-directed play scripts earned friendship status; those who did not eventually suffered rejection by the normal models.

The handicapped children tended, however, to prefer play activities which minimized social interction (e.g., solitary or parallel play). Moreover, these children at times appeared totally uninterested in social contact when such opportunities were made available to them during free play periods. The central playstyle of the handicapped children was a cluster involving unoccupied/solitary/adult-directed play in which teacher structuring was often necessary for promoting peer social interaction, particularly in the context of activity transitions. Once facilitated into peer oriented play by the teacher, interventions continued to be necessary for maintaining positive relations among

the children as a result of the handicapped children's inclinations for connection/access denial, nonsharing, nonconstructive and inappropriate play, and their reliance on aggression for conflict management.

Social passivity, marginal communication skills, and limitations in physical ability restricted most of the mildly and moderately mentally handicapped children to parallel play involvements with the normal models. In parallel social interactions, the handicapped children characteristically maintained their activities by negative sharing and the use of aggression to resolve sharing problems. Moreover, persistent positive justice violations involving sharing and aggression problems tended to disable developing friendship relations between the handicapped children and the normal models. On the bright side, it is significant to note that handicapped children whose peer social interactions originated from a base of parallel or adult-directed play and who managed to conform to classroom norms of social conduct, tended to be the ones who were more socially accepted by the normal models in the long run.

Summary and Discussion

Friendship between handicapped and nonhandicapped preschool children was seen to be activity-related, in which the quality of children's relationships is more important than the quantity of interaction. According to the "constructivist" view, as espoused by contemporary developmental psychologists and sociologists like Piaget (1974), Cicourel (1974), and Corsaro (1984), children operating within a level-one stage of friendship development interpret and judge their social relationships on the basis of specific encounters with others, rather than viewing friendship in terms of a social system of enduring values. For preschool children, friendship is defined functionally (Lewis, et al., 1975) in terms of peers who can be engaged in a specific activity.

Friendship is also conceptualized by preschoolers in terms of such joint activities (Mannarino, 1980). The quality of social interaction within joint activities, is, in turn, determined by children's competencies for initiating social transactions and conforming to activity requirements which include not only skills for playing the game but also adherence to mutually understood standards of acceptable social conduct (Drabman & Patterson, 1981: Gottman, Gonso, & Rasmussen, 1975; Hartup, 1975).

It must be emphasized, however, that different kinds of activities place differential demands on children for participation and social interaction. Differences in developmental sophistication also predispose children's preferences for social participation and their inclinations to engage in particular activities. These considerations place increased importance on the "responsiveness to the leader" factor and have implications for the selection of nonhandicapped children who are expected to function as normal peer models.

Skills for <u>maintaining</u> social interaction were central to the success of the handicapped children's involvement in cooperative play activities and their subsequent social acceptance by normal peers. These skills involved not only the regulation of interpersonal conduct through adherence to accepted rules governing social interaction, but also compliance with scriptal demands organizing reciprocal interchanges among the players. The keys to maintaining cooperative interaction within both of these competency domains included the possession of shared knowledge among the participants, the players' competencies for communicating this information, and the ability to manage conflict successfully when the need for script negotiation arose.

Nelson and Gruendel (1979) and Corsaro (1983) both conclude that shared script knowledge is the basis for maintaining cooperative role play, particularly fantasy-dramatic activities, and that the development of role play

activities depends largely on the use of language processes to articulate and communicate scripts. Hence the importance of "verbal definition statements" for maintaining cooperative interaction. Corsaro (1983) points out, however, that the importance of verbal behavior for script maintenance and development is related to the nature of the role play. Scripts that are highly action oriented (e.g., "cops and robbers", "Buck Rogers", etc.) do not require as much verbal involvement as motor involvement whereas family role plays (e.g., "House") require much more dialogue because of the more interpersonal nature of the interaction. This partially explains the greater success of the handicapped children's involvement in action oriented role plays than in more interpersonal scripts since language involvement is less critical to the former than the latter. Data from the present inquiry and that of Corsaro's (1983) study are mutually supportive. The clarification request strategy used by the handicapped children in the present study to facilitate family role play interaction served a function similar to that which Corsaro (1977) found in adult-child interactions: clarification requests function to avoid misunderstandings and are employed as a strategy for making sense of other players' scriptal contributions.

For the most part, cooperative play involving action scripts were more successfully maintained than family role play scripts because of the differential involvement of language in these activities. Corsaro's (1983, 1984) data tend to support this interpretation. However, role play interaction typically disintegrated not because of substantive scriptal demands since the normal models tended to tailor these demands somewhat to the handicapped child's role playing competencies, but rather, because of behavior that violated social interaction rules. Such disintegration typically occurred when the handicapped

children used aggression to manage conflicts over disagreements in script development.

The basis for many of these normative rule violations appeared to be that the normal and handicapped children simply functioned in what Guralnick (1981) has called "different societies". Cast in a different light, this difference in peer culture orientations might be attributable to different stages of moral reasoning in the handicapped and normal preschool children's concepts of social regulation, authority, and notions of positive justice. In terms of Damon's (1977) stage model, even the most advanced preschool handicapped children appeared to function at level-zero in which positive justice choices derived from the child's egocentric desires that something occur, unconstrained by any sense of social rules for regulating behavior. In contrast, the normal models tended to conduct themselves at level-one according to social rules which they enforced by reference to the demands of adult authority figures like parents and teachers.

Findings of the present study also suggest that social relations between normal and handicapped children which originate from a positive base of parallel or adult-directed play are more likely to be sustained and may eventuate in more complex interactions, than if cross-group friendships are initially tested through cooperative activity involvements. This assertion is supported by studies conducted with normal preschool populations which have shown that initial object-focused peer contacts set the stage for more complex social involvements in cooperative activities (Mueller & Brenner, 1977) and that significantly more peer social interaction occurs during teacher structured free play than in either active teacher involvement or no teacher involvement (Shores, Hester, & Strain, 1976).

Implications for Practice

The development of appropriate social behaviors in handicapped children must become a primary educational goal of preschool intervention if mainstreaming is to succeed under a philosophy of normalization (Strain & Shores, 1977). One way to accomplish this goal is through social skills training (Gresham, 1982) in which the agents of intervention include both classroom instructional staff and normal peer models. However, administrators and program coordinators must share this responsibility by creating an environment in which change agents such as normal peer models can be effective.

Significant modeling effects do not occur simply by exposing handicapped children to their nonhandicapped peers. While handicapped children's deficits in cognitive and social skills contribute to this problem, focusing interventions solely on the handicapped can achieve only a partial solution. Gresham (1981) is correct, therefore, when he suggests that "improving handicapped children's social interaction might be a two-way street: attention must be paid to both handicapped and nonhandicapped participants in the interaction" (p. 168). Thus, educators, must also attend to the training of normal peer models in efforts designed to improve social integration within "normalized" preschool intervention programs. In short, systematic planning by teachers and administrators for structuring social interaction among children in least restrictive environments is necessary in order to achieve modeling effects.

In view of the above considerations, it is distressing to note not only the absence of validated social skills training curricula (Guralnick, 1981) but also the lack of adequately developed theory regarding which social skills need to be selected (Gresham, 1981). Toward filling this void, the grounded theory approach

of the present study offers some implications for both the selection of target behaviors and the development of social skills training curricula relevant to the facilitation of "reverse mainstream" approaches for educating handicapped preschool children. Other practical implications of the research include considerations for: (a) coaching nonhandicapped children to function as effective normal peer models: (b) diagnosing the onset of peer affiliation problems in order to avert the social rejection of handicapped children; and (c) selecting normal models for enrollment into an integrated preschool classroom.

Developing Social Skills Training Curricula. Preschool handicapped children's social skill deficits must first be defined in terms of their peer interaction problems within the context of specific activities and associated requirements for social participation. Findings reviewed earlier in this paper on the quality of peer social interaction indicated four major behavioral properties important for the development of friendships between handicapped and normal models: (a) sharing; (b) nonaggression; (c) connection/initiation skills; and (d) abilities for complying or contributing to the development and maintenance of play scripts. Handicapped children's social skill deficits might be diagnosed with respect to these four properties, taking the child's developmental level and activity inclinations into account.

Second, the nature of the child's social skill deficits within each of the four friendship properties could be conceptualized as a problem in one of three dimensions: (a) a skill which the child does not possess and hence must be learned; (b) a skill which the child does possess but does not perform; or (c) a skill which the child does possess but which is performed under inappropriate circumstances. Gresham (1981) refers to these three social skill dimensions in terms of skill deficits, performance deficits, and self-control deficits.

Once the handicapped child's social interaction problems have been identified with respect to the four properties of friendship development and the nature of each problem understood, then it would be appropriate to select a social skills training strategy suitable for remediating a specific target behavior. A variety of behavioral techniques derived from social learning theory for training social skills are available to teachers, each of which may be more or less suitable as a remediation strategy depending on the nature of the social interaction problem and the context of specific activity participation requirements. A review of the available behavioral techniques is outside the scope of the present paper and the reader is referred to Gresham's (1981) extensive review. The approach outlined here for developing a social skills training curriculum is illustrated below in Figure 1 for the case of Bart, a central figure among the handicapped students' peer culture in this study.

	Nature of the Problem			
Social Interaction Context	Skill Deficit	Performance Deficit	Self-Control Deficit	Remediation Strategy
Sharing	X			Coaching
Aggression			X	Coaching
Connection/Initiation		X		Contingent Teacher Attention & Coaching
Script Maintenance		X		Socio-Dramatic Structuring

Figure 1: A Theoretical Approach to the Development of a Social Skills Training Curriculum for Handicapped Preschool Children

In the context of cooperative role play activities, Bart's social interaction problems can be summarized as follows: (a) lack of understanding of the sharing concept; (b) use of aggression to resolve conflicts in script negotiation and the inability to control such aggressiveness; (c) inconsistency in the performance of effective social initiations; and (d) inconsistency in effectively maintaining within the scriptal parameters of role play activities. Given his low-normal cognitive abilities and in spite of his learning disabilities, Bart would be a reasonable candidate for social skills remediation through direct instruction using coaching techniques (Meichenbaum & Goodman, 1971; Oden & Asher, 1977) in order to learn the concept of sharing and related social knowledge important to social competence. Coaching techniques could also be used to help Bart gain self-control over his inappropriate use of aggression.

Bart's inconsistency in effectively initiating social interaction would also benefit from coaching but could easily be reinforced during free play through contingent teacher attention (Strain, 1977). Helping Bart to maintain within the scriptal parameters of role play activities would benefit from teacher structuring of peer socio-dramatic interaction (Shores, Hester, & Strain, 1976; Strain, 1975, Strain & Wiegerink, 1976). In structuring socio-dramatic peer interaction, a teacher might read a familiar children's story, discuss the theme of the story, suggest roles for particular children, prompt the children in performing relevant role behaviors, and then direct the children to use appropriate verbal maintenance strategies such as clarification requests. This would be followed by releasing the children for free play in order to enact a role play activity.

Coaching Normal Peer Models. While improving handicapped children's social skills may facilitate their opportunity to benefit from exposure to normal peer

models, such benefits will not be realized unless positive peer interactions take place. In short, educators should optimize the occurrence of positive peer-peer connections in free play settings. This, in turn, can be facilitated by coaching normal models in the use of effective affiliation-connection strategies in order to promote the initiation of positive social interaction with handicapped peers. The present research suggests that encouraging normal models to utilize the "offer-invite-suggest activity" strategy in an iterative and progressively focused manner may be a promising coaching procedure.

Diagnosing the Onset of Social Rejection. Educators would be well advised to familiarize themselves with the behavioral indicators of affiliation problems between handicapped and normal children which may be signalling the development of social rejection. Behavioral indicators of particular diagnostic value would include the observation of: (a) playstyle shift effects (i.e., shifting to a less interactive style of play); (b) particular playmate shifts; (c) negative social comparison statements by normal models directed toward handicapped peers; and (d) persistent articulation by the normal models of positive justice and script violations. Accurate and early diagnosis of social rejection would be valuable in the identification of specific children and their social interaction problems as a first step toward developing individualized social skills curricula which may prevent the process of social rejection from occurring.

Enrollment of Normal Models. Care should be taken in enrolling nondelayed children who are not overly sophisticated in their social development and playstyle preferences in comparison to the social skills of those handicapped children with whom they are expected to interact. The present research suggests that normal models in the 2-4 year old range may be optimal since these children may be more inclined to develop viable cross-group friendships from a base of

parallel play and subsequently encourage the growth of more complex cooperative interactions with their handicapped peers. Administrators should also consider the advisability of enrolling pairs of same-sexed normal models (rather than, for example, a single male and a single female normal model) in order to ensure the potency of "normalizing" peer group influences, particularly in situations where the handicapped child's peer culture is dominated by a single strong personality.

Needs for Further Research

As indicated by Gresham (1981), considerable research is needed in developing social skills curricula for application to particular handicap populations in natural settings since much of the previous research in this area has been conducted in laboratory settings with nonhandicapped populations. In many respects, this study is a first step in accessing the black box of mainstreaming processes. However, research is needed for validating and refining some of the emergent constructs of the present study. The significance of constructs like the playstyle shift effect, the clarification request, and the sequenced use of the offer/invite/suggest activity connection strategy merit further examination. Inquiry into these kinds of issues should prove fruitful for improving both our methods of measurement and our understanding of mainstream education.

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